



Soldiers representing various time periods of the 3d Military Police Company's history move in as a patrol and escort the company guidon and its bearer back into history.

Leading the Way:

The 3d Military Police Company's Inactivation and Conversion

By Mr. Andy Watson

The 3d Military Police Company led the way as one of the Army's oldest military police units and continues to lead as one of the first units converted as part of the Army's Modular Force Structure Plan. Under this plan, military police companies will no longer be assigned to Army divisions. This conversion was a challenge readily accepted by the soldiers of the 3d Military Police Company, which was inactivated 15 March 2004 at Fort Stewart, Georgia, with an official ceremony on 13 May 2004. Its soldiers have been reorganized into larger, more robust military police platoons that will be assigned to each of the four newly formed maneuver brigades that are activating at Fort Stewart. This change will be part of the foundation for Future Force structures known as units of action (UAs) and units of employment (UEs).

The Army is transforming its current hierarchical structure—three echelons of command and overlapping functions above brigade level—into a future structure based primarily on functions. This will reduce the echelons above brigade to only two—units of employment-tactical (UEX) and units of employment-operational (UEY). The UEX is the

principal warfighting headquarters that engages the enemy directly, while the UEY focus is theaterwide support. The 3d Infantry Division is the first Army division to convert to a UEX headquarters design. The division will further reorganize its brigade combat teams and major subordinate commands into both maneuver and support UAs. This conversion illustrates the Army's stated goal of creating a brigade-based Army. The maneuver UAs are built on the current force brigade combat team model, giving them more maneuverability and speed than a division. These UAs unite the strengths of units such as armor or infantry and their supporting units and combine them into rapidly deployable forces. These quick-reaction forces are task-oriented, being formed to manage threats that do not require the encumbrance of an entire division, corps enablers, or augmentation from the Reserve Component.

Under the Modular Force Structure Plan, two divisions will be converted to this new system each year, beginning in 2004. They will consist of one light division composed primarily of infantry UAs and one heavy or mechanized division composed primarily of



The 3d Infantry Division commander, Major General William G. Webster, Jr., with members of the 3d Military Police Company and “Rocky,” the division mascot.

armor UAs. This year, the models for conversion are the 3d Infantry Division (a heavy division) and the 101st Airborne Division (a light division).

Under the plan, divisional military police missions will be performed by military police combat support companies from other military police force providers, such as military police battalions or brigades, which will be force-pooled at the UEy. The military police brigade commander may choose smaller structures such as multifunctional and multicomponent battalion task forces or company teams for mission completion. These units will be task-organized and mission-tailored to meet the needs of the supported maneuver commander. These modular, scalable military police units will have the appropriate mix and command, control, and function elements to provide combat support, law enforcement, investigative, or resettlement operations. The 3d Military Police Company is at the forefront of these changes affecting the Army.

The unit's history began during World War I. It was activated on 12 November 1917 as the 3d Training Headquarters and Military Police, 3d Division, and organized 8 January 1918.¹ The unit arrived in France in early April 1918 and participated in the following campaigns: Champagne, Aisne,

Champagne-Marne, St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne, and Aisne-Marne.² Members of the 3d Military Police Company performed admirably during the Marne offensive, even fighting as infantry to hold the lines.³ When World War I ended in November 1918, the company performed policing duties during the occupation of Germany until its return to the United States in August 1919.

The 3d Military Police Company was redesignated as the 3d Military Police Platoon during World War II and had an active role in the following campaigns: Tunisia, Sicily, Naples-Foggia, Anzio, Rome-Arno, Southern France, the Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe.⁴ During the Anzio beachhead operation, 3d Military Police Platoon soldiers quickly moved inland and established control posts that greatly assisted the movement of traffic from the beaches.⁵ As these posts were moved inland along road junctions and bridges, they were constantly harassed by enemy fire.⁶ Despite the danger, the military police manning these posts observed and reported enemy activity, collected prisoners of war, apprehended stragglers, and maintained circulation control.⁷

During World War II, the 3d Military Police Platoon gained fame for having one of the first military

working dogs to serve with the military police.⁸ “Chips,” a previously decorated canine (Silver Star and Purple Heart), helped monitor the increasing numbers of German prisoners of war from 1943 to 1945.⁹ When the war ended, the 3d Military Police Platoon again performed policing duties during the occupation of Germany until the unit’s return to the United States in 1946.

In 1950, the 3d Military Police Company participated in the Korean conflict in the following campaigns: Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) Intervention, First United Nations (UN) Counter-offensive, CCF Spring Offensive, UN Summer-Fall Offensive, Second Korean Winter, Korean Summer-Fall 1952, Third Korean Winter, and Korean Summer 1953.¹⁰ The company earned an Army Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation for the Uijongbu Corridor, the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation for the Iron Triangle, and the Chryssoun Aristion Andrias (Bravery Gold Medal of Greece).¹¹

More recently, the 3d Military Police Company served in Operation Iraqi Freedom, providing combat support to the 3d Infantry Division. The unit also trained Iraqi police with courses that focused on the basics of day-to-day police work.¹² The task was tailor-made for the soldiers of the 3d Military Police Company, since they provided daily law enforcement support for the Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield communities.¹³

Despite the transformation in unit structure, the soldiers of the 3d Military Police Company continue to serve with distinction. After the inactivation ceremony, the 3d Infantry Division commander explained to the soldiers that the inactivation was “not the end of a unit and its history, but rather a sharing of the 3d Military Police Company’s expertise to benefit more units.”¹⁴

Endnotes

¹Center of Military History, 3d Military Police Company Lineage and Honors Information, <www.Army.mil/cmh-pg/lineage/branches/mp/0003mpco.htm>, (19 December 2000).

²Ibid.

³Dr. Ronald Craig, “*Military Police Operations*,” Military Police History course lecture, May 2004.

⁴Center of Military History, (19 December 2000).

⁵Donald G. Taggart, editor, “*History of the Third Infantry Division in World War II*,” Washington, Infantry Journal Press, 1947, p. 435.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Major George E. Allen, editor, “*Chips*,” Military Police Journal, Volume IX, August 1959, p. 35.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Center of Military History, (19 December 2000).

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Specialist Katherine Robinson, “*Brotherhood of the Badge: MPs, IPF Work to Make Fallujah Safe*,” The Liberator, 11 July 2003, p. 10.

¹³3d Military Police Company Inactivation Program 2004.

¹⁴Ibid.